

# Worksession

<b>Agenda Item #</b>	5
<b>Meeting Date</b>	September 22, 2008
<b>Prepared By</b>	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager
<b>Approved By</b>	

<b>Discussion Item</b>	Update from Safe Takoma, Inc. and Introduction of New Operations Manager
<b>Background</b>	<p>The City of Takoma Park's budget for FY 2007 included \$75,000 for a cross-jurisdictional crime prevention initiative along the border between the City of Takoma Park and the District of Columbia, commonly referred to as Safe Takoma. The City's commitment of funds was predicated on an equal contribution from the District of Columbia.</p> <p>Interested residents of the City of Takoma Park and the District of Columbia formed an entity known as Safe Takoma, Incorporated. Its officers are as follows: Seth Grimes, President; Faith Wheeler, Vice President; Sara Green, Secretary; and Andy Kelemen, Treasurer.</p> <p>The City entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Safe Takoma in May 2008 and made an partial disbursement of funds. Safe Takoma will return to the Council in November to provide a formal progress report before disbursement of the remaining funds.</p> <p>At the worksession on September 22, Seth Grimes will provide an update on the activities of Safe Takoma and will introduce Ronni Miller, the operations manager.</p>
<b>Policy</b>	<p>The City Council determines how City funds are expended and the services to be provided by the City government or others on its behalf.</p> <p>Under Maryland law, state and local governments may appropriate public funds for any "public purpose." The courts have consistently held that that governments may appropriate funds to private entities that provide services that are public in nature if the government maintains supervision and control over the public service at issue and requires total accountability by the private entity for the public funds. The law does not define what constitutes a public purpose. The control and accountability necessary when public money is appropriated to private entities may be imposed through legislation applicable to specific grantees or through individual contracts with grantees.</p>
<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	N/A
<b>Attachments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Takoma Report dated August 2008</li> <li>• Draft plan for a new Safe Takoma activity called "Neighborhood Safety Perspectives"</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendation</b>	Council to hear the update from Safe Takoma, Inc.
<b>Special Consideration</b>	

## Safe Takoma Report, August 2008

Prepared by Safe Takoma, Incorporated on behalf of the

Takoma DC Neighborhood Association

7106 Piney Branch Road

Washington, DC 20012

Contact: Sara Green, Secretary, Safe Takoma Incorporated, 202-829-8802

### Funds Expended

Washington DC, prior expenditures:	\$10,949.27
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Washington DC, current month expenditures:	\$4,650.25
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Washington DC, unreimbursed expenses (liabilities):	\$58.65
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Takoma Park MD, prior expenditures:	\$6,627.91
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Takoma Park MD, current month expenditures:	\$4,650.25
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Takoma Park MD, unreimbursed expenses (liabilities):	\$16.00
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### Funding Balances (August 31, 2008)

Washington DC contribution:	\$75,000.00
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Washington DC funding balance:	\$58,341.83
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Takoma Park MD contribution:	\$30,876.86
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Takoma Park MD funding balance:	\$19,582.70
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Allocated funding Takoma Park MD, pending release:	\$44,123.14
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### Status

The Safe Takoma program undertook the following organizational and programming steps in August 2008:

- National Night Out
  - After all the planning and anxiety, the National Night Out event finally took place. Although there were some last minute tasks, and the threat of rain, the event went well. Having the event at the metro station worked out well as we were able to engage many commuters. We began setting up at 5pm, and there was an immediate influx of people around the table wanting to know what we were doing. Most of the commuters embraced the safety whistle idea and eagerly signed up to participate in the program. There were only a

few who refused to provide their contact information and therefore did not receive a whistle. By 6:30 all the whistles, lanyards and key chains were gone. However, Metro police graciously donated what whistles they had. STI collected 175 completed sign-up sheets.

- The police presence and interaction was wonderful! WMATA Capt. Pavlick was there most of the time, with several officers, to include a K-9 and motorcycle officer. In addition, TPPD officers and civilian employees were present distributing safety information. Chief Ricucci was there for most of the event and commented that we did a great job coordinating it. Officer Butler of MPD was also present. The Takoma Park MD Mayor was there and two Council Members also stopped by. STI Board members and Operations Manager was also interviewed by reporters from the Takoma Park cable station.
- Although STI's National Night Out event was not on the grand scale as some others, it was definitely successful.
- Spreadsheet developed with Whistle contact information. We received a total of 175 completed sign ups. Most seem to have provided sufficient contact information for us to follow up.
  - Twenty-nine individuals are interested in joining a citizens patrol. Three individuals already patrol.
  - Twenty-nine individuals would like to arrange a police home safety inspection.
  - Ninety-seven individuals would like to join the AlertTakoma e-mail list. Two are already on the list.
  - Thirty individuals would consider volunteering with Safe Takoma.
  - Fifty-nine individuals are interested in conflict-resolution programming.
- Conflict- resolution training continued at the Takoma DC Recreation Center and the Takoma Park Maryland Recreation Department through August 15<sup>th</sup>. A meeting was held with CR trainers to discuss program outcomes as well as provide suggestions for future programming.
- Faith Wheeler and Ronnie Miller actively participated in weekly meetings for the Truancy Task Force Youth Outreach program held at Coolidge Senior High School.
- Office furniture and equipment purchased. Phone and Internet service also ordered and installed.
- Information for STI directory compiled and being developed.
- Monthly status meeting held with Chief Ricucci. Suggestions for future STI programming ideas and events discussed. These include:
  - Attendance at the Folk Festival scheduled for mid September
  - Periodic walk around neighborhoods (every 6 months to 1 year) to conduct environmental inspection
  - Safety Fair

- State of the City meeting with the city council
- Kids event
- Attendance at the Sunday Farmers Market. Police presence would also be there.
- Possible cable station interview
- Youth program
- Arranged workers compensation coverage.

## September 2008 Plans

- The Board of Directors first-Thursdays meeting is slated for September 4.
- Complete compiling a spreadsheet with Whistle Program sign-up information.
  - Complete questionnaire to conduct Safety Whistle Program follow up.
  - Follow up with those who indicated a willingness to join a neighborhood patrol or volunteering with Safe Takoma or in arranging a home inspection.
- Planned meetings:
  - Meet with MPD-4D Commander Brown on September 10.
  - Participate in a Takoma Park City Council Safe Takoma worksession on September 22.
  - Meet with Takoma Park Police Chief Ricucci on September 23.
  - Participate in a September 23 meeting on Old Takoma public safety with Council Member Josh Wright, Ward 1 neighborhood association heads, and Chief Ricucci.
  - Meet with Thomas Barrett, Director, Joint School of Carpentry, on September 25 to discuss pre-apprenticeship apprenticeship training as part of youth-development programming.
  - Meet with representatives of the Takoma Park Community Action Group to develop youth-development programming.
  - Conduct planning meetings with DPR staff to develop future conflict-resolution programming.
- Complete STI directory.
- Create FY09 budget.
- Develop additional neighborhood safety programming.
- Prepare for participation in the October 5 Takoma Park Street Festival.
- Plan and do outreach for an October 7 Safe Takoma stakeholders/programming meeting.
- Develop, implement, and conduct additional programming per the Safe Takoma Work Plan.
- Carry out regular planning, administrative, and reporting tasks.

# **SAFE TAKOMA**

## **Neighborhood Safety Perspectives**

**Draft -- September 15, 2008**

### **Introduction**

Neighborhood Safety Perspectives is an activity within Safe Takoma's Community Engagement initiative, one of four Safe Takoma program areas.

Community Engagement as a whole aims to boost awareness and involvement of Old Takoma stakeholders – residents, businesses, and community institutions – related to public-safety concerns. It seeks to stem crime and lessen the fear of crime by improving conditions in the commercial and residential areas surrounding the Takoma Metro station, Safe Takoma's focus area.

There are two aspects to Neighborhood Safety Perspectives. The first looks at streets and the second at people:

1. Periodic assessment and on-going attention to Old Takoma physical conditions.
2. Periodic survey of opinion about Old Takoma safety that seeks, in particular, to enlist stakeholder assistance in identifying problem areas and involvement in steps toward improvement.

### **Periodic Assessment of Physical Conditions**

#### ***Approach***

The assessment approach has five steps as follows:

1. Determine issues
2. Prioritize: Rate identified concerns on a scale of 1-3 based on both seriousness and feasibility of correction. For instance, burned-out traffic and pedestrian signals are both serious and correctable while a misaligned street sign is less serious and a vacant lot is not easily correctable.
3. Identify cognizant party, e.g. a government agency or private property owner or tenant.
4. Take corrective steps, usually in the form of communication with the cognizant party
5. Follow up, typically by revisiting the problem site after allowing time for issue correction.

The assessments would be conducted on foot, in Takoma Park MD, Takoma DC, and around the Takoma Metro station. The main assessment of each area would be conducted during daylight hours. A second walk-around to look at lighting and after-dark visibility would be conducted in the evening.

The assessments would be coordinated by Safe Takoma with participation by police. It may be desirable for MPD-4D and Takoma Park police representatives to jointly take part in the assessments around the Takoma Metro station and on border streets. We may ask neighborhood volunteers and public-safety contacts to participate.

We would invite the participation of neighborhood leaders and keep elected officials apprised of

the assessments.

The assessments would record of the following information:

- Street address
- Business name (if applicable)
- Issue
- Property owner
- Tenant (if applicable)
- Priority
- Suggested corrective steps
- Corrective step(s) taken
- Outcome
- Follow up step(s) (if applicable)

***Assessment criteria***

Public right of way

- Damaged, missing, or misaligned/leaning street signs
- Street lights burned out
- Pedestrian and traffic signals burned out
- Degraded, damaged, or inadequate pavement markings (e.g., lane striping, turn indicators, crosswalks)
- Crumbled/damaged sidewalk or curb
- Poorly maintained shrubbery, trees, grass, or plants
- Graffiti
- Excessive litter
- Wiring and utility pole issues
- Illegal signage
- Loitering, evidence of public urination, animal feces, etc.
- Illegally parked vehicle
- Abandoned vehicle
- Working state of police call box
- Other

Private property (based on observation from sidewalk)

- Excessive litter, clutter, or debris
- Porch lights not on after dark
- Poorly maintained structure, yard, or fencing
- Neighborhood complaints about improper/illegal noise, activities, or usage
- Unsecured doors, windows, ladders, property (e.g., bicycles), etc.
- Apparently unlocked vehicle
- Nonconforming or poorly maintained business signage

- Interior of a storefront business not visible from sidewalk
- Apparent security of vacant lot
- Apparent security of vacant storefront
- Apparent security of vacant residential property

#### Lighting

- Inadequate after-dark lighting

#### ***Focus area***

The assessment focus area is roughly all streets within one block of the Old Takoma commercial axis. This represents a subset of Safe Takoma's focus area, which is the residential and commercial areas within a half mile of the Takoma Metro station. It may be extended. The following streets are part of the assessment focus area:

- Carroll Avenue, 7000 block
- Cedar Avenue, 7100 block
- Holly Avenue, 7100 block
- Laurel Avenue, 6900 block
- Maple Avenue, 7100 block
- Tulip, 200-300 blocks
- Westmoreland Avenue, 6900 block
- Walnut Avenue, 6900 block
- Willow Avenue, 7100 block
  
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, 6800-6900 blocks
- 5<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, 6800-7000 blocks
- Aspen Street, NW, 200-400 blocks
- Blair Road, NW, 6800-7100 blocks
- Butternut Street, NW, 300-400 blocks
- Carroll Street, NW, 100-300 blocks
- Cedar Street, NW, 400 block
- Eastern Avenue, NW, 6800, 7000 blocks
- Laurel Street, NW, 6900 block
- Maple Street NW, 6900 block
- Piney Branch Road, NW, 7100 block
- Walnut Street, NW, 6900 (?) block
- Willow Street NW, 6900 block
  
- Takoma Metro station
  - bus area
  - elevator area
  - park area

- parking area
- station plaza and Metrorail entrance

### ***Corrective Action***

- For issues in the public right-of-way (streets, sidewalks, parks):
  - Reports delivered to cognizant agency (DC or TP-MD Dept of Public Works; WMATA; PEPCO; WSSC; MD State Highway Administration; other) depending on jurisdiction.
  - Reports copied to elected officials (DC, TP-MD city council member and mayor) depending on jurisdiction.
  - Cover letter will request an action plan including corrective steps to be taken and timing.
- For issues identified on private property, whether businesses or residences:
  - Communication identifying the concern and suggesting corrective steps delivered to property owner and to tenant if applicable.
  - In the case of a likely code violation (e.g., shrubbery/vegetation, graffiti, sanitation), cognizant agency may be consulted.
  - After an appropriate interval, reassess to determine if the issue was corrected; then decide appropriate steps if not or acknowledge and thank the property owner/tenant if it was.

### ***Analysis***

- Count of issues by block, type, and severity
- Issues closed and time to closure
- Correlation with crime incidents
- Correlation with public safety perceptions
- Trending over time

### ***Periodicity***

Assessments will be conducted every six months: in September-October and in March-April.

## **Periodic Opinion Survey**

Safe Takoma would periodically survey public opinion about Old Takoma safety, seeking, in particular, to enlist stakeholder assistance in identifying problem areas and involvement in steps toward improvement.

### ***Approach***

- Create an on-line survey that asks a small number of basic questions:
  1. How safe do you feel on the Takoma street where you live or work? Rate from 1 (very secure) to 5 (very insecure) or mark “Don't live/work in Takoma.”
  2. How safe do you feel in the Takoma business district? Rate from 1 (very secure) to 5 (very insecure).
  3. How safe do you feel at the Takoma Metro station? Rate from 1 (very secure) to 5 (very insecure).
  4. How has your perception changed over the last year: Feel more secure,



unchanged, feel less secure.

5. What would make you feel more secure on the Takoma street where you live?
  6. What would make you feel more secure in the Takoma business district?
  7. What would make you feel more secure at the Takoma Metro station?
  8. What is your Takoma residential or place-of-employment street address?
  9. Optional: Name and contact information.
- Request stakeholder participation in the survey.
  - Analyze and report finding.
  - Follow-up correctable issues with cognizant authorities.

### ***Stakeholders***

Survey participation would be solicited via neighborhood e-mail lists and Safe Takoma contacts – including individuals who took safety whistles – would be directly contacted. Stakeholders to be surveyed are in the following categories:

- residents
- business owners and employees
- community organizations (e.g., churches, schools)
- transit users

### ***Analysis***

- Compilation of issues by type and location
- Correlation with physical conditions
- Correlation with crime incidents
- Trending over time

### ***Periodicity***

Assessments will be conducted every six months: in September-October and in March-April.